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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/924,892	08/08/2001	Tadashi Iwasa	5259-000001	3699

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EXAMINER

PHAM, HAI CHI

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2861

DATE MAILED: 08/14/2002

4

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Applicant(s)

09/924,892

Applicant(s)

IWASA, TADASHI

Examiner

Hai C Pham

Art Unit

2861

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 08 August 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 3. 6) ☐ Other: .

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Drawings

2. Figures 4 and 5 should be designated by a legend such as --PRIOR ART-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

3. Claim 1 IS objected to because of the following informalities:
 - Line 3, "radiates a laser beam comprising an image data signal" should read -- radiates a laser beam according to an image data signal--.Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

Art Unit: 2861

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-4, 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Imai et al. (U.S. 5,975,772) in view of Imai (U.S. 6,023,283).

Imai et al. ('772) discloses a thermal developing apparatus, which extracts unexposed films (A) one by one and carries them to an exposure unit (46), radiates a laser beam (L) according to an image signal onto the film as it passes the exposure unit, and developing the exposed film by heating it at a heating unit (heating drum 68), which provide a uniform temperature distribution.

However, Imai et al. ('772) fails to disclose the interval between an exposure position of the exposure unit and a heat start position of the heating unit being shorter than the length of the film in the delivery direction, and the exposure process and heating process being performed in parallel simultaneously, and the heating unit being provided with heating blocks arranged on either side of the film, and the density level detecting unit.

Regardless, Imai ('283) discloses an image forming apparatus and method, which comprises the steps of providing unexposed films (S) one by one, carrying the unexposed films to an exposure unit (12), exposing the film by providing thermal energy according to an image to be recorded as the film passes the exposure unit, and developing the exposed film by heating it at a heating unit (heat rollers 34a, 34b), the interval between an exposure position of the exposure unit and a heat start position of the heating unit being shorter than the length of the film in the delivery direction, and the

exposure process and heating process being performed in parallel simultaneously. Imai ('283) further teaches the heating unit being provided with two heating blocks (heat rollers 34a, 34b) arranged on either side of the film, a density level detecting unit (LED 125 and light detector 127, Fig. 21) downstream to the heater for the detecting the density of the developed image such that the exposure unit is controlled through a feedback loop.

It would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Imai et al. ('772) with the aforementioned teaching of Imai ('283) for the purpose of providing a more compact thermal developing device as well as a better density control of the developed image.

6. Claims 5-12, 17-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Imai et al. ('772) in view of Imai ('283), as applied to claims 1-4 above, and further in view of Arai et al. (U.S. 6,215,103).

Imai et al. ('772), in view of Imai ('283), discloses all the basic limitations of the claimed invention except for the large curvature of the film passage and the fluororesin coating.

However, Arai et al. discloses a heat developing apparatus having two heating blocks (52, 54, Fig. 6) forming a film passage whose curvature is larger with respect to the emulsion side (upper side) of the film (12), the internal faces of the two heating blocks being coated with heat insulating material such as fluorocarbon resin (col. 11, lines 1-54) for the purpose of providing a uniform heating temperature.

Art Unit: 2861

It would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Imai et al. ('772), as modified by Imai ('283), with the aforementioned teaching of Arai et al. By doing so, there would be no difference in the heating temperature being caused between a portion of the heat developing film.

7. Claims 1/25-4/25 and 13/25-16/25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Imai et al. ('772) in view of Imai ('283), as applied to claims 1-4 above, and further in view of Ozaki et al. (U.S. 5,887,212).

Imai et al. ('772) in view of Imai ('283), discloses all the basic limitations of the claimed invention except for the flatness regain rollers and the cooling region.

However, Ozaki et al. discloses a development processing apparatus, which includes a cooling region by means of a fan (108), and a pair of flatness regain rollers (72, 110), for discharging the exposed film, the fan and the rollers being disposed downstream of the heating plate (98A, 98B).

It would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Imai et al. ('772), as modified by Imai ('283), with the aforementioned teaching of Ozaki et al. for the purpose of eliminating a possibility of curled film.

Art Unit: 2861

8. Claims 5/25-12/25, 17/25-24/25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Imai et al. ('772) in view of Imai ('283) and Arai et al., as applied to claims 5-12, 17-24 above, and further in view of Ozaki et al.

Imai et al. ('772), in view of Imai ('283) and Arai et al., discloses all the basic limitations of the claimed invention except for the flatness regain rollers and the cooling region.

However, Ozaki et al. discloses a development processing apparatus, which includes a cooling region by means of a fan (108), and a pair of flatness regain rollers (72, 110), for discharging the exposed film, the fan and the rollers being disposed downstream of the heating plate (98A, 98B).

It would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Imai et al. ('772), as modified by Imai ('283) and Arai et al., with the aforementioned teaching of Ozaki et al. for the purpose of eliminating a possibility of curled film.

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hai C Pham whose telephone number is (703) 308-1281. The examiner can normally be reached on T-F (8:30-5:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John S. Hilten can be reached on (703) 308-0719. The fax phone numbers

Application/Control Number: 09/924,892

Page 7

Art Unit: 2861

for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 305-3431 for regular communications and (703) 305-3431 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.



HAI PHAM
PRIMARY EXAMINER

August 8, 2002